

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6154
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3740

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, US, SF, WA
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: WESTERN FIVE BRIEFING OF COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA

REF: USUN 3706

1. SUMMARY. WESTERN FIVE BRIEFING OCTOBER 11 OF STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE UN COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA WAS A FRIENDLY, SURPRISINGLY RELAXED AFFAIR. WHILE THE COUNCIL MEMBERS EXPRESSED CLEARLY THEIR DOUBTS, CONCERNS, AND SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE WESTERN FIVE INITIATIVE IN NAMIBIA, THERE WAS NONE OF THE TENSION AND ANTAGONISM WHICH HAVE MARKED PAST COUNCIL BRIEFINGS. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE WESTERN FIVE CONTACT GROUP BRIEFED THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE UN COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA OCTOBER 11 ON THE LATEST ROUND OF TALKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. THE BRIEFING, WHICH LASTED AN HOUR AND A HALF, WAS CONDUCTED ON THE BASIS OF THE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL. THE WESTERN FIVE WERE REPRESENTED AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL BY AMBASSADORS MURRAY (UK) AND

THABAULT (FRANCE). OTHER WESTERN FIVE MISSIONS, INCLUDING US, WERE REPRESENTED AT COUNSELLOR LEVEL. THE STEERING COMMITTEE WAS REPRESENTED BY CHAIRMAN KONIE (PERM REP OF ZAIMBIA), AMBASSADOR JACKSON (PERM REP OF GUYANA), AND AMBASSADOR DIAZ (PERM REP OF MEXICO). OTHER MEMBERS OF STEERING COMMITTEE (ALGERIA, INDIA, ROMANIA, SENEGAL, AND YUGOSLAVIA) WERE REPRESENTED AT WORKING LEVEL. UN COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA AHTISAARI WAS ALSO PRESENT.

3. FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF TALKING POINTS BY AMBASSADOR MURRAY, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN KONIE OPENED THE FLOOR TO COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS, WHICH COVERED A BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES RELATED TO OUR INITIATIVES: THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL; THE SIGNIFICANT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT WHICH THE PRESENCE OF ANY SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS ON THE NORTHERN BORDER WOULD HAVE ON THE ELECTORATE; THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL AND THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE; AND PANEL OF JURISTS AND PARTICULARLY WHETHER THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATIONS CONCERNING ITS MEMBERSHIP; AND WALVIS BAY.

4. WHILE THE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS MADE CLEAR THE SKEPTICISM, DOUBTS, AND CONCERNS OF THE COUNCIL REGARDING OUR INITIATIVE, THEY WERE PRESENTED IN A CALM, ACADEMIC MANNER AND WITH NONE OF THE TENSION AND ANTAGONISM THAT HAVE MARKED COUNCIL BRIEFINGS IN THE PAST. THE COMMENTS WERE THOUGHTFUL AND WIDE-RANGING BUT NOT PENETRATING. TO THE SURPRISE OF ALL OF THE WESTERN FIVE, NOT ONE OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS, IN THE ENTIRE CONFIDENTIAL

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HOURLY AND A HALF BRIEFING, ASKED FOR THE PRECISE TROOP LEVEL FIGURES CONTAINED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL - PRECISE FIGURES WHICH HAD INTENTIONALLY BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE TALKING POINTS USED IN THIS BRIEFING (REFTEL). ALSO UNEXPECTED WAS THE MILD WORD OF PRAISE WHICH THE FIVE RECEIVED FROM GUYANA. THE PERM REP OF GUYANA WHO IN THE PAST HAS BEEN A MOST OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF OUR INITIATIVE PRECEDED HIS QUESTIONS AND CRITICISMS THIS TIME BY STATING THAT IN HIS VIEW THE INITIATIVE OF THE FIVE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE GENERAL POLICIES OF THE UN IN ITS ATTEMPT TO BRING INDEPENDENCE TO NAMIBIA.

5. COMMENT. THE FRIENDLY AND GENERALLY RELAXED ATMOSPHERE OF THE COUNCIL BRIEFING AND THE COUNCIL'S APPARENT RELUCTANCE TO ATTACK OUR INITIATIVE TOO STRONGLY SEEM, WHILE PLEASANTLY SURPRISING, EXPLAINABLE BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS:

(A) THE COUNCIL'S SENSE THAT IT IS BOUND TO THE POSITIONS OF SWAPO AND THE COUNCIL'S PRESENT LACK OF CERTAINTY AS TO WHAT SWAPO'S POSITIONS ACTUALLY ARE NOW AND WHAT THEY WILL BECOME AS OUR INITIATIVE CONTINUES.

(B) THE COUNCIL'S RECOGNITION THAT THE WESTERN FIVE INITIATIVE IS PROCEEDING AND THAT SWAPO APPEARS TO BE COOPERATING WITH THE INITIATIVE.

(C) THE COUNCIL'S DESIRE NOT TO BE REGARDED AS A STUMBLING BLOCK OR AN OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF AN INTERNATIONALLY-ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION IN NAMIBIA. THIS FINAL POINT WAS MADE EXPLICITLY BY CHAIRMAN KONIE IN HER CONCLUDING REMARKS AT THE BRIEFING WHEN SHE SAID THAT SHE HOPED THE COUNCIL WOULD RECEIVE FURTHER BRIEFINGS FROM THE FIVE AND THAT THE FIVE WILL NOT CONSIDER THE COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA TO BE "A STUMBLING BLOCK OR AN OBJECT TO BE AVOIDED". END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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